



There's an understandable desire to look forward at the moment. At Alder Grange we're doing this by focusing on what we're always working towards at this time of year – transitions.

Transitions are the different 'moving on' phases of our students, starting with the youngest moving up to high school from primary, those making the step from Year 11 up to sixth form, and finally students advancing on from sixth form to university, apprenticeships or employment.

These stages need to be managed as smoothly as possible, not only for the young person's wellbeing, but also to enable good progress from the outset. This year it's increasingly important. In any 'normal' year students are always ready to move on – however after the challenging year they've just had; our students are particularly looking forward to a brighter future.

For those starting high school in September, we're putting measures in place to make the change as worry-free as possible. Often all that's needed is to reduce uncertainty by increasing familiarity with the school by providing information, buddies, tours, informal online meet ups and school visits (yes, we're hoping to be able to host these in the summer term).

In terms of those advancing on to sixth form, the focus is on helping them select the right course options for their career aspirations and style of learning. This year we'll also be offering extra 'bridging' sessions in some subjects to help students who need to boost learning in key areas prior to September.

And for those ready to move onto university, apprenticeships or employment, it's a similar picture. As well as helping with applications, we'll be supporting them to make informed choices and providing top-up learning where required.

Each stage is different, but all equally significant. The move up to 'big school' is very different for children, however typically it's parents who are most likely to feel anxiety about the change. Academically, the step from GCSE to A-levels or similar is huge in terms of the increased demands on students, depth of learning and standard of work required. And of course, for those moving on to university, the life changes are massive – learning to look after themselves, cook, navigate a new town or city and campus, whilst making new friends.

Arguably it's most important to get the first transition stages right, to build resilience. If a child can progress through a period of change in a smooth, confident way they'll feel more able to face any other challenges they may face in the future.

And the key to getting it right? Communication. We work closely with young people, their families, teachers and non-teaching staff, as a team. The secret is to keep talking – most concerns or issues can be fixed just by asking a question. We're all working towards the same goal, to help our young people progress and achieve the best they can. They're ready to move on to the next stage and we're ready to help them.